were present H. H. Burkitt Esquire, I. C. S., the Resident in Travancore and Cochin, A. J. H. S. Hillman Capt. R. A., Assistant Resident, R. Viraraghava Iyengar Esquire, B. A. & B. L., Chief Justice and the Heads of Departments and Offices and several non-official gentlemen.

IV. Copies of the Dewan's Address in English, Malayalam and Tamil were distributed to the Members. Copies of the Administration Report of the State for 1095, of the Report on the Administration of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for 1095 and of the Memoranda of subjects in English and Malayalam were also distributed among the Members.

The Dewan then opened the Assembly with the following

ADDRESS.

"Gentlemen,

PRELIMINARY.

Under the gracious command of His Highness the Maha Raja, it is my privilege to welcome you to the Seventeenth Session of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.

2. Personnel.—Since the last Session of the Assembly, there have been several changes in the higher ranks of the public service. Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair, who steered the ship of State safely through six years constituting one of the most trying periods in its economic history, retired from the office of Dewan on the 25th Mithunam 1095, and His Highness the Maha Raja was pleased to appoint me to succeed him. The sudden death, on the 27th Karkadakam 1095, of Mr. K. Raman Menon, the late Chief Justice, while still on leave preparatory to retirement, came as a painful shock to the people of the State whom he had served so well. Mr. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar, Senior Dewan Peishkar, retired into private life on a well-earned pension after a record of long and strenuous service. Mr. N. Raman Pillai, the Excise Commissioner, to whose able and energetic lead for a period of about twelve years, the Excise Department, which supplies the State with more than a third of its entire revenue, owes its steady and substantial advancement, also retired towards the close of the year. Lieutenant Commander W. L. Kelly, the Principal Port Officer, and Lieutenant H. C. Hodgson, Battalion Commandant, Nayar Brigade, reverted to the British service. Among other retirements of the year, those of Mr. O. S. Barrow, the Deputy Chief Engineer, Mr. K. R. Rangaswami Aiyangar, Executive Engineer, and Mr. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Deputy Director of Public Instruction, are worthy of particular mention. All these officers rendered valuable service to the State in their different spheres of work, and I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to place on record the Government's appreciation of their services.

3. Events of 1095.—Copies of the Administration Report for the year 1095 M. E. have been placed in your hands and that report deals in detail with the administration of the State during the year. I need hardly say that the record of work embodied in that report is almost wholly that of Mr. Krishnan Nair who, I am sure, would be quite satisfied with your verdict on it. It is customary on this occasion to review the work of the past year, but I do not propose to follow that precedent this year. I would only briefly mention the outstanding features of the year. The year was the first one when the State, like the rest of the world, began to recover from the adverse economic effects of the great war, and owing to the release of shipping and a revival of transport facilities, as well as the large inflow of capital that had taken place as a result of the high prices of commodities requisitioned during the war, the State exhibited a marked revival in trade and activity in company promotion, in spite of unfavourable seasonal conditions. For the first time after the war, it was found possible to terminate the restrictions that had to be imposed on the freedom of trade and to give up State control over the distribution of food-grains and other necessaries of life, and Government were able to satisfy more than the minimum requirements of the departments of administration that deal with the extension of communications and the advancement of public well-being.

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4. Plan of Address.—Addressing, as I do, the Assembly for the first time, I propose to take stock of the administration and to outline roughly the future policy and in doing this I shall incidentally mention what has been done in these directions since I took charge about eight months ago. Travancore has been fortunate in the possession of an uninterrupted succession of able Dewans, and I need hardly say that each one of them has, in his time, contributed his share to the improvement of the administration of the State. Yet it is only a truism to state that, but for the rare foresight and the ripe wisdom of His Highness the Maha Raja, the marvellous co-ordination of the beneficent activities of the several Dewans, whose ideals and view-points must necessarily differ, would have been utterly impossible, and the State would not have been able to achieve that steady progress which is its proud possession to-day. It is therefore in a spirit of reverential humility that I attempt to make a survey of the present situation, and with the help of the fresh experiences we have learnt from the momentous changes in ideals and outlook on life that are so rapidly taking place around us, examine the various problems that confront us for solution and endeavour to solve them in a manner suited to modern conditions and requirements.

5. Subjects of Survey.—The domain of administrative activities that I now propose to survey may be conveniently grouped under the following four main heads, *viz.*, (1) the development of the resources of the State and the promotion of the material and moral well-being of the people; (2) the enhancement of the efficiency of the administration; (3) the satisfaction of the civic, political and social aspirations of the people and the removal of inequalities of opportunities for self-advancement among them; and (4) the improvement of the finances of the State.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES AND PROMOTION OF MATERIAL AND MORAL WELL-BEING.

6. Assignment of Land.—Agriculture is and must remain for a long time to come the staple industry of Travancore, as of the rest of India. It follows then that the paramount duty of the State is to promote this industry on the right lines and by every means in its power. Agricultural prosperity depends as much on a well-designed scheme of land-assignment calculated to bring about an equitable distribution of agrarian holdings, as on the regularity of the seasons or the efficiency of the measures calculated to increase the output or minimise the dangers arising from floods and other visitations. It is with a view to achieving this object that the revision of the rules regarding the assignment of lands has been taken in hand by me, and the revised rules, in their draft stage, have been published for the criticism of the public. It is also with the same object that the Land Assignment Bill has been introduced in the Legislative Council. Government are not unaware of the adverse criticisms that have been directed against the draft Puduval Rules or of the still stronger opposition to which the draft Land Assignment Bill has been subjected, but Government would venture to state that a good deal of this criticism and opposition is based on an erroneous understanding of the subject and that nothing is farther from the intention of the Government than the creation of facilities to the outsider for the exploitation of land in Travancore or the erection of legal barriers against the reasonable remedies obtainable by the private citizen against the wanton misuse of the powers vested in revenue officials. In emphasising the policy of sale of lands for value in conveniently small blocks, by public auction or otherwise, Government are only following a procedure that has the sanction of long standing usage in this as well as in the neighbouring State of Cochin, and the main object which Government have in view in promulgating the two new measures is the protection to the the ignorant ryot from the wily exploiter and the unscrupulous capitalist and to bring him on to his feet, for the ultimate benefit of the country, of the industrious dependant and the unfortunate landless. Government hope to issue these measures in their final form with the necessary modifications, after a careful consideration of the several objections raised against them.

7. Land Records.—In an attempt to improve the conditions of agricultural industry, a proper system of survey and land records is only a matter of comparatively a short period of years.

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